

Message Text

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43

ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 CIAE-00

DODE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 PA-01 USIA-06 PRS-01 /051 W

----- 097122

R 201038Z SEP 76

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3563

INFO SECDEF WASHDC

CINCPAC HONOLULU

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 26163

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MORG, TH

SUBJECT: TOP MILITARY APPOINTMENTS ANNOUNCED

SUMMARY. AFTER WEEKS OF SPECULATION AND NUMEROUS LEAKS, RESHUFFLE OF THAI SENIOR MILITARY OFFICERS WAS OFFICIALLY PROMULGATED SEPT 17, TO BE EFFECTIVE 1 OCTOBER. AT COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF LEVEL, THERE WERE NO SURPRISES AND, IN FACT, ENTIRE LIST BROUGHT LITTLE REACTION, ALTHOUGH TWO GENERAL OFFICERS WHO FEEL THEY HAVE BEEN DEMOTED, HAVE PUBLICLY THREATENED RESIGNATION. BLATANT POLITICAL MANEUVERING OF THE KIND THAT HAS OCCURRED IN THE PAST WAS NOT APPARENT IN NEW APPOINTMENTS, WHICH SEEM BASED LARGELY ON PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS. NO SIGNIFICANT REPERCUSSIONS EXPECTED. END SUMMARY.

1. THE NEW LIST, INVOLVING 164 SENIOR OFFICERS, WAS ANNOUNCED OFFICIALLY OVER THE RADIO ON FRIDAY EVENING, SEPT 17. FOLLOWING ARE KEY APPOINTMENTS:

(A) RTA COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF - GEN SERM NA NAKHON
DEP CINC - GEN PRASERT THAMMASIRI
ASST CINC - LTGEN YOS THEPHASIDN
ASST CINC - LTGEN SITHI CHIRAROJ
CHIEF OF STAFF - GEN PRALONG VIRAPRIYA (NO CHANGE)
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DEP COS - LTGEN CHAO SAWADISONGKRAM

DEP COS - LTGEN VITOON YASAWADI
ASST COS (PERSONNEL) - MAJGEN RIAN DITHABANCHONG
ASST COS (INTELLIGENCE) - LTGEN PRAYUTH CHARUMANI (N.C.)
ASST COS (OPERATIONS) - MAJGEN VIRAPAN RANGKARATNA
ASST COS (LOGISTICS) - LTGEN SANT CHITPATIMA
COMMANDER FIRST ARMY - LTGEN AMNART DAMRIKARN
COMMANDER SECOND ARMY - LTGEN PREM TINSULANOND (N.C.)
COMMANDER THIRD ARMY - LTGEN SOMSAKDI PANCHAMANOND (N.C.)
COMMANDER FOURTH ARMY - MAJGEN PIN THAMMASRI

(B) RTN COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF - ADM AMORN SIRIKAYA
DEP CINC - ADM SONTIBOONYACHAI
CHIEF OF STAFF - ADM CHING CHULLASUKHUM
ASST CINC - VADM SUVICHIAN FUNGLADA
COMMANDER ROYAL FLEET - VADM SATAB KEYANONT

(C) RTAF COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF - AIR CHIEF MARSHALL KAMON

(D) SUPREME HEADQUARTERS
SUPREME COMMANDER - AIR CHIEF MARSHALL KAMON
DEP. SUPREME COMMANDER - GEN. KRIANGSAK CHAMMANAND

2. GENERALLY, THE LIST OF APPOINTMENTS WAS RECEIVED WITH EQUANIMITY AND THERE WAS LITTLE CRITICISM IN THE WEEKEND PRESS. WITHIN THE MILITARY ESTABLISHMENT ITSELF THE REACTION WAS MOSTLY ONE OF CALM ACCEPTANCE, ALTHOUGH TWO AFFECTED OFFICERS WENT PUBLIC IMMEDIATELY AND THREATENED TO RESIGN. FOURTH ARMY COMMANDER LTG SAN CHIPPATIMA, WHO WAS REASSIGNED TO BE ASST. COS(LOGISTICS), CLAIMED HE WAS BEING DEMOTED AND HIS NEW APPOINTMENT WAS AN AFFRONT TO HIS DIGNITY AND HONOR. LIKEWISE, MAJ. GEN. YUTHASAK KLONGTRUATROK, 9TH INFANTRY DIVISION COMMANDER, CLAIMED HIS REASSIGNMENT AS 5TH DIVISION COMMANDER WAS A DEMOTION AND SAID HE WOULD RESIGN. WHILE THE DISSATISFACTION OF THE TWO HAS MADE FRONT PAGE IN THE BANGKOK PRESS, THE REACTION WITHIN THE ARMY HAS BEEN CALM, ALTHOUGH EACH MAN, QUITE NATURALLY, HAS HIS SYMPATHIZERS. SUPREME COMMANDER ADM. SA-NGAD REACTED SIMPLY BY SAYING HE WOULD NOT STAND IN THE WAY OF ANYONE WHO WANTED TO RESIGN BECAUSE HE IS UNHAPPY WITH HIS APPOINTMENT.

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3. SAN AND YUTHASAK'S DEPARTURE PROBABLY WOULD NOT GRIEVE TOO MANY PEOPLE. BOTH ARE CONSIDERED OPPORTUNISTS BY MANY OF THEIR PEERS. SAN FREQUENTLY HAS BEEN CRITICAL OF HIS SUPERIORS (ALTHOUGH HE HAS ACHIEVED SOME ACCLAIM FOR OPERATIONAL SUCCESSES AGAINST INSURGENTS IN THE SOUTH OF THAILAND). YUTHASAK WAS CLOSE TO GEN. CHALARD HIRUNSIRI, WHICH MAY HAVE INFLUENCED THE DECISION TO RELOCATE YUTHASAK AWAY FROM BANGKOK.

4. WITH OVER 160 SENIOR OFFICERS BEING AFFECTED, IT IS NOT TERRIBLY SURPRISING THAT THERE ARE A FEW DISGRUNTLED INDIVIDUALS. WHETHER SAN AND YUTHASAK GOING PUBLIC WILL TRIGGER FURTHER GRUMBLING REMAINS TO BE SEEN, BUT DISSATISFACTION WITH THE NEW APPOINTMENTS DOES NOT SEEM LIKELY TO REACH PROPORTIONS THAT WOULD POSE A SERIOUS PROBLEM FOR THE GOVERNMENT. IN THE MISSION VIEW THE NEW APPOINTMENTS BY AND LARGE CONSTITUTE A LOGICAL CAREER PROGRESSION AND SEEM TO BE BASED PRIMARILY ON SENIORITY AND PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS WITH MINIMUM POLITICAL CONSIDERATIONS, WITH THE ONLY REAL "DARK HORSE" APPOINTMENT BEING THAT OF LTG AMNART DAMRIKARN AS COMMANDER OF THE FIRST ARMY.

5. DAO SEPTELS PROVIDE FURTHER DETAILS ON NEW APPOINTEES AND COMPLETE LISTING OF NEW ASSIGNMENTS.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: MILITARY PERSONNEL, PERSONNEL APPOINTMENTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 20 SEP 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: morefirh
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976BANGKO26163
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760354-1199
From: BANGKOK
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760943/aaaabkik.tel
Line Count: 132
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: morefirh
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 30 OCT 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <30 OCT 2003 by GarlanWA>; APPROVED <06 JAN 2004 by morefirh>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: TOP MILITARY APPOINTMENTS ANNOUNCED SUMMARY. AFTER WEEKS OF SPECULATION AND NUMEROUS LEAKS, RESHUFFLE OF THAI SENIOR MILITARY OFFICERS WAS OFF
TAGS: MORG, TH, (SERM NA NAKHON), (PRASERT THAMMASIRI), (YOS THEPHASION), (SITHI CHIRAROJ), (CHAO SAWADISONGKRAM), (VITOON YASAWADI)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006